

## Notes on the Microlepidoptera

By H. C. HUGGINS, F.R.E.S.

*Eucosma mercuriana* Hübn. On July 29th 1968 I was collecting in the Brandon range near Dingle at about 2500 feet above sea level in the place where on the previous day I had seen the remarkable flight of *Pieris brassicae* L. (*Ent. Record*, 80: 316). My object was to get a couple more of the mountain race of *Calostygia didymata* L., but although it was a hot sunny day there was a cold breeze on the crest, so I descended about 50 feet into a hollow. When I had taken one *didymata* I came to a little cliff over the top of which was hanging a large plant of *Vaccinium*. Over this several small moths were flying; I netted one and it proved to be a newly emerged *mercuriana*, new to me in Ireland. I netted another, and then went for a walk round the hollow for the last *didymata* I wanted to complete my set.

I then decided to go back for some more *mercuriana*, but before I reached the place the sun clouded over and all insects stopped moving, so after a quarter of an hour's wait I set off home. I fully intended to come back the next day, but I must have got a chill watching *brassicae* on the 28th as I developed a nasty cold and it was a week before I could return, and then the mountain tops were wreathed in mist and I saw no insects whatever.

This record for *mercuriana* seems to give it quite a new Irish range. Beirne (*Microlepidoptera of Ireland*: 90) gives only one southern one, Comeragh lakes, Waterford, and only four others, the most southerly of which is Dublin, though he states it is apparently frequent on the high hills, probably a conjecture.

I have never before seen it in West Cork or Kerry; I should have expected it particularly on Caha plateau near Glengariff.

One point particularly interests me: the insect's food. Barret (11: 197) states that the larva lives in a web on *Dryas octopetala*, although Dr. Wood reared it on heather, and conjectures that it is not very particular as to its food. L. T. Ford (*Guide to the smaller British Lepidoptera*: 66) gives the food as *Culluna*, *Vaccinium*, and *Dryas*, but as he does not give his usual details of its method of feeding I gather he had no personal acquaintance with it.

The interesting part of this is that in Barrett's account of the moth he mentions *Dryas* several times. I have never seen *Dryas* on the Dingle peninsula or indeed anywhere off limestone in Ireland. There are acres of it, of course, in the Burren.

In my little place, the moths were only round this big trailing plant of *Vaccinium* as I kept my eyes on the heather when tramping about for the last *didymata*. As I remember exactly where the plant was, I hope to visit it and look for the larva in mid June this year.

My two Kerry *mercuriana* are slightly larger and brighter than my North Lancashire ones.

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CORRECTION.—In the account of "Breconshire and Monmouthshire Entomology" (antea. p. 40) fifth line up, for *Cardamine amara*, please read *Cardamine pratensis*.